



COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION & LABOR
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE
STATEMENT

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC)
Republican Leader, Committee on Education and Labor
Organizing Meeting for the 116th Congress**

I welcome the new and returning members of the committee, and I'll take this opportunity to publicly congratulate you on the beginning of your chairmanship. We have had several private conversations recently, but as the record for this Congress begins anew, I want everyone to know how much our positive working relationship has meant to me.

The bipartisan successes of this committee during the last Congress, particularly the *Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act* and the *Juvenile Justice Reform Act*, should be credited to every member who served.

But they would not have been possible, Mr. Chairman, without your personal dedication to seeing them through and the open lines of communication between us.

My personal experience informs me that chairing this committee requires vigilant stewardship of a vast and sometimes complex legislative jurisdiction. While you and I may have switched seats, I am as committed as ever to ensuring all members of this committee are heard on the issues that fall under our purview. Because I know you also care deeply about the legislative process, you will have my support and any assistance I can offer as you advocate for all of us on that front.

Many of the bipartisan accomplishments we have achieved together over the years are now laws at crucial stages of implementation.

It's my hope that we exercise our oversight responsibilities by asking the right questions for the right reasons to ensure faithful execution of the laws we have written.

We know the skills gap is real. The impacts and opportunities that come from seven million job openings are being felt, right now, in communities large and small across the country. As employers are stepping up their efforts to find, reward, and retain skilled workers, this has the potential to be an era of choice, freedom, and unlimited possibilities for the current workforce and for students of all ages who will soon be making their own decisions about the future.

Individual Americans, with their unique, God-given talents and a shared history of innovation, have the power to make this era of opportunity permanent. However, we also have the power, if we choose to act irresponsibly, to stand in their way.

As this committee embarks on its important work, the question of who we are empowering, and at whose expense, must remain at the forefront.

It's now my pleasure to introduce some new faces on our side of the dais. As we've spent some time getting to know each other and talking about the work of this committee, I have been impressed with the level of enthusiasm our new members have shown. And, fittingly for a committee that handles education issues, they've all done their homework and are ready to get to work.

So, I'm pleased to introduce:

- Representative Ben Cline of Virginia;
- Representative Russ Fulcher of Idaho;
- Representative Van Taylor of Texas;
- Representative Steve Watkins of Kansas;
- Representative Ron Wright of Texas;
- Representative Dan Meuser of Pennsylvania;
- Representative William Timmons of South Carolina; and
- Representative Dusty Johnson of South Dakota.

Two members who are not new to Congress but are excited to be joining this committee are Representative Mark Walker, my fellow North Carolinian, and Representative James Comer of Kentucky.

It's also a pleasure to welcome our returning Republican members. With their proven records of legislative accomplishments and bipartisan relationship-building, I know we will all benefit from their continued service on the committee. Dr. Roe, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Walberg, Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Byrne, Mr. Grothman, Ms. Stefanik, Mr. Allen, Mr. Rooney, Mr. Smucker, and Mr. Banks—welcome back.

This is the best committee in the House, and not because we have so many outstanding members.

In all of Congress, this is the committee that is best equipped to find solutions for the most pressing issues facing American students, workers, and families today. I believe that, keeping this in mind, we can set the example for the rest of our colleagues to follow.

#